

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/073,896
Response dated September 16, 2003
Reply to OA of August 1, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of these amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicant regards as his invention. The applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action.

Specification

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it contains legal phraseology such as "means" in lines 6 and 9 which should be avoided.

The Applicant has amended the Abstract to avoid the term "means."

Rejections under 35 USC §102(e)

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Govzman et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,454,332).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a suction pad to suck the flat part of the plate;" and "a retry control unit for controlling the plate suction and lifting device ~~in order to~~ so as to have the plate suction and lifting device suck the plate again ~~by changing after changing a location to be sucked by the suction pad in~~

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the flat part of the plate ~~sucked by the suction pad~~ if the suction pressure ~~of the~~ measured by the suction pressure detecting means does not reach ~~the set~~ a set pressure when sucking the plate.”

The portion in Govzman et al referred to by the Examiner reads as follows:

Referring to FIG. 4, in accordance with one method, a substrate may be handled as follows. Clamping member 66 is coupled to vacuum source 90 (step 110). **Sufficient vacuum pressure is applied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition** (step 112; three-way valve is in the high vacuum position). The substrate is positioned on transfer arm 28 in contact with contact surface 102 (step 114). The pressure is monitored (step 116). **If the pressure monitored by sensor 96 is higher than a first threshold (step 118), the substrate is not properly positioned. Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition (step 112),** and the substrate is re-positioned on the transfer arm (step 114). If the monitored pressure is lower than the first threshold, the vacuum pressure is decreased in response to a decrease in the monitored pressure resulting from the fact that channel 100 is closed by the substrate and that channels 104, 106 are closed by pusher 70 (step 120; three-way valve in the low vacuum position). If the monitored pressure is higher than a second threshold (step 122), pusher 70 has missed the substrate and is over-extended. In this case, pusher sensing channels 104 and 106 will be open. **Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted position (step 112),** and the substrate is re-positioned on the transfer arm (step 114). If the monitored pressure is lower than the second threshold (step 122), the substrate is properly clamped onto the transfer arm and the substrate now may be transferred for processing (step 124).

(Column 6, lines 13-43).

The apparatus of Govzman et al does not have “a suction pad to suck the flat part of the plate.”

In Govzman et al, vacuum pressure is applied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition but

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not to suck the substrate. Sufficient vacuum pressure must be applied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition. Therefore, the portion referred to by the Examiner merely indicates that when the vacuum pressure monitored by sensor 96 is not sufficient, the clamping member 66 is not placed in the retracted position, thus, the substrate is not properly positioned. Then sufficient vacuum pressure is reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition.

Moreover, the description "Sufficient vacuum pressure is then reapplied to place clamping member 66 in the retracted condition (step 112)" in Govzman et al merely indicates reapplying vacuum pressure. Govzman et al does not change a location to be sucked by the suction pad in the flat part of the plate.

Therefore, Govzman et al does not teach or suggest, among other things, "a suction pad to suck the flat part of the plate" and "a retry control unit for controlling the plate suction and lifting device so as to have the plate suction and lifting device suck the plate again after changing a location to be sucked by the suction pad in the flat part of the plate if the suction pressure measured by the suction pressure detecting means does not reach a set pressure when sucking the plate."

For at least for these reasons, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Govzman et al. Claims 2 and 3, depending from claim 1, also patentably distinguish over Govzman et al for at least the same reasons.

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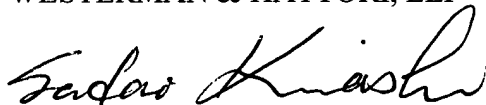
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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